BRUNT

flies low when autumn threatens,

box-shaped houses of Spartan, gray as old wimples, drip rheumy tears from tin gutters. All of an ex-pression, with their second-story win-dows set flat, like frogs' eyes, the square parlor window with the shade drawn and the slanting bit of roof over the small front door. Before Steven Kineady's square-

faced house the garden lay beaten into the mud, buried half alive. A row of geraniums with brown bruised heads died as they waited for their usual transplanting to tin can and kitchen

beside the range a wool shawl and a pair of woman's overshoes exuding. Annie Kineady, her hair the color of red coals, disheveled in her black, thick stuff dress and her large white hands clasped at the back of her neck, lay low in her rocker beside the fange, face upturned to the squat teiling and a rain of tears slashing it. "If only I was laying out next to my baby, Liddy. If I only was!"

Opposite her, erect in a sawed-off chair. Liddy Kineady swallowed "I didn't care, Liddy, that he didn't

baby, Liddy. If I only was!"
Opposite her, erect in a sawed-off chair. Liddy Kineady swallowed through so tight a throat that cords sprang out in her long fleshless neck. "It's a sin before the Lord that a wife should take on so, Annie Beasley Kineady. A sin before the Lord, and he could strike you down for it."

and her bosom, high as Juno's, rising.

"Then why don't he, Liddy? Why don't he?"

"Girl, girl, it's afraid I am even to listen to you, for fear you'll be struck down before my eyes!" And she withdrew, shuddering, to the stoveside.

"Why don't he?" What I got left?

"Ain't you got your husband? big, likely husband?"

"Inevented to how big and clean he can look—"

"Wasn't it town talk when he was a boy how May Wellington used to drive past our house every evening in her swell phaeton just for a glimpse of him in the yard?"

"Her and her long nose! With all her money Steve couldn't see past that."

"Just the same, you wasn't the only one could have married above married above."

"I neven

millinery shop and was mar-

"Five years, and you knew what you

Ing about when I say he ain't a drunkard in the bones. Steve ain't His father before him went through a few bad years just like Steve, and after his pledge lived in temperance till he died in old age. It ain't in his

That's what I thought, Liddy, those "It's the pledge that'll do the work

"He's a God-fearing man. Annie, like his father before him. If you can only get him to take the pleage, now that he feels himself slippin' back. If you

only can:"
"Oh, nothing counts."
"Shh-h! I tell you it's just the hole his heart that drove him home that 'And don't forget the night before. and the night before that! Three run-

fore he comes home these first nights to find his little one not here. Just drop to warm him."

Lord. I used to say, a man should crowd the whole world out of his heart over a child, and his being taken this way proves it. It was a sin before the Lord how he banked

after these three years. He says himself the burn is like a pain that don't hurr when when he gets that way, wild to ditch ever his grandfather and thing shameful, Annie Kizeady

tell you. Wasn't I the one predicted it was the child being born would get

The box-shaped houses of Spartan, gray as old wimples, drip rheumy lears from tin gutters. All of an expression, with their second-story windows set flat, like frogs' eyes, the square parlor window with the shade drawn and the slanting bit of roof over the small front door.

Before Steven Kineady's square-laced house the garden lay beaten into the mud, buried half alive. A row of the three years, Annie, and with the three years, Annie, and with the sweet as hay, and didn't it? For them three years, Annie, and with the way as weet as hay, and didn't it? For them three years, Annie, and with the wa

Annie, a man should——"
"I didn't care, Liddy, that he didn't seem to love nothing on God's green arth but that child. I knew that, too weep down in him for him to know it, he was loving me, too, with every kiss he gave the child. Lovin' me for bein' its mother. I never cared a bit, Liddy, when he came home evenings, you know how big and clean he can look——"

drew, shuddering, to the stoveside.

"Why don't he?" What I got left?

What?"

"Ain't you got your husband? Your big, likely husband, girl? What has got you? Come what will, he's your husband!"

"Yes, Liddy, but—"

"You that's been the one all these three weeks to comfort him and keep him away from the terrible blues that gets him when he comes 'aome nights, all of a sudden to turn l'&e—like this, Annie."

"Yeh, to comfort him. To—comfort him. Bah!"

Liddy Kineady fell to fumbling deep in a region of her black petiticoat for her handkerchief, blinking back the cosing tears, and while she fumbled her streaming gase fixed on nothing in particular between the range and the indoor cistern. Rain battered like pepper shot.

"To think I'm sitting here in my brother's own house listening to his own wife only five years after."

"Yee, Annie Beasley Kineady, five years since that April morning you stood up with him in the back parlor of your millinery shop and was mar
"He never learned it, Liddy. It was next day, a Wednesday, when all of a sudden he quit playing and lald down sick-like next to his blocks, his little curls—"

"He never learned it, Liddy. It was next day, a Wednesday, when all of a sudden he quit playing and lald down sick-like next to his blocks, his little curls—"

"He his little vellow carls."

down sick-like next to his blocks, his little curls—curls—"
"His—his little yellow curls. How he did used to holler when his old maid aunt corkscrewed 'em!"
"And and that morning Liddy. "Five years, and you knew what you was doing and bragged about it. He wasn't a saint, but he wasn't a devil neither, and it is more'n you can expect of any man he should be more'n middlin'."

"Oh, Liddy, what does a man's sister knew about —"
"Sister! Didn't I raise him like a mother? Raised that boy, motherin' him when I was so young I myself quivering.

mother? Raised that boy, motherin' him when I was so young I myself needed a mother almost as bad as he did."

"I knew, Liddy. I know."

Raised him like my own. You can remember yourself when you was kids together back in your own mother's time, that there wasn't a boy in Spartan, from the Lowneys down, was starchier of a Sunday than Sevey, o—"

"Yes, yes, Liddy."

"Raised him and fed him by plaiting wire nettings when I ought to been playing doils, tryin' and slavin' to been the playing doils, tryin' and slavin' to been playing

playing dolls, tryin' and slavin' to keep that boy out of the Shelter Home. Don't tell me a sister don't know—"

"Liddy, Liddy, Steve ain't forgot all you done for him."

"It sin't that! He's paid it back a thousand times, working himself up to assistant foreman at the works, and as good a brother as comes and all, but don't say I don't know him, Annie, anybody that's nursed a boy from measles to marriage like I have

was threatening to sell out her rooming house on her."

"He himself was the one wanted you to go—said a body should go to her own relation's funeral, even if he was a ne'er-do-well and seventy mile away."

"Yes, yes, that's just it. But last night and the night before, Liddy, he kept mumbling and throwing it up to me that I—that I was the one let him get the meningitis, and all. Me, Liddy. I was the one."

"Annie!"

"Yes, like he don't remember how the child slept that one night I was

"Tes, like he don't remember how the child slept that one night I was gone all tucked up in your bed, and how we laughed when you said yourself how you couldn't sleep for keeping him covered and watching his little curls all spread out over the pillow the way his daddy liked 'em."

"You mustn't pay attention to Steve, Annie, when he gets to talking thataway. I tell you, just a drop makes a silly out of him. Just a drop!"

"I tell you, Liddy, it's killing me! Poisoning me! I can't stand hearing it. I—I won't. It's the same as if he tore the heart out of me and the sou!! I can't stand it, Liddy. I won't."

"But, Annie——"

"But. Annie—"
"I can't stand it, Liddy. I won't!"
"But. Annie—"
"I can't! I didn't want to call you,
Liddy, out today in all this weather
and let it out to you, but I can't hold
in no more, Liddy. I can't. Can't!
sit here with the rain beatin' all day
and the house in this terrible quiet
and nothing waiting for me nights
but hell. Can't! Can't! Can't!"
"Annie, girl—"

comes home hights and—and plate of thickly-cut bread in the center of the spread table. Strong smells

Then, because of the Westend movement, and because people are constantly prospering or falling back, and the street car franchise outling through the seclusion and a new gen-eration turning from a brown stone

for the store tomorrow, like I'd never been down."

"S'pose the Fair's without a floorwalker a day or two more, Mr. Foddie, while you're getting well. You mustn't overde right off!"

"Some little bouncing bell I am ab?"

"Pretty, but girl, I've seen lots of em in my time; been hirin' 'em for

mustn't overdo right off!"

"Some little bouncing ball, I am, eh?
Down on Saturday, right in the middle
of a mill-end sale, and up on Monday,
ready as a fighting cock for the beginning of the semi-annual clearin."

"Oh, Mr. Foddie, forgetting right
away and taking all sorts of risks,
when the doctor told you that excitement—is dangerous and—"

"Nothing is dangerous around this
here joint, Miss Annie, except you."

"You! Ugh, whatta I care what

when the doctor told you that excitement—is dangerous and—"
"Nothing is dangerous around this here joint, Miss Annie, except you."
"Cut that!"
"What'd I say that was wrong?"
"Nothing, but cut it; that's all."
"I was only fooling, Annie."
"What?"
"Miss Annie I was only fooling Miss.

"Miss Annie, I was only fooling, Miss Annie. I like to see you get mad with that red-haired temper of yours and those great big, beautiful—"
"Cut it, I said." She moved back
from him into the gloom of halls and
toward her open door.

toward her open door.

"Well, of all the little spitfires!"

The cry rose, thin as a quall's, and she turned back toward him.

"He was croupy all night, Mr. Foddie; I could hear him. Did you fix up the tent over his crib and burn creosote under it like I showed you?"

"Just don't know, Miss Annie, what's ailing the little fellow. Got the lamp alrighty, but what does it mean, Miss him through a blur of scorn." over, not real feverish, but just hot? Dry-like."

the three-windowed third-floor front and toward a small crib in its corner, bending over and into it, her large white hands gripping its sides. "If he needs a doctor, Miss Annie, I ain't the one to spare expense-

"Sh-h-h-h" She raised her face to him with her finger laid across her lips. "He's dropped off again. It's nothing the matter with the little fellow, Mr. Foddle, but just croup. My—my little one used to get just this way, too—hot and dry-skinned, but not real feverish. Just you burn creosote tonight again and see how it fixes him up."

He advanced toward her, sloughing in his felt slippers the length of the floor. There was a spaciousness and an air of upholstered comfort about that room, once removing it from the chilly category of the "neatly furnished." An upholstered sofa, bulgy but spacious, was drawn out alongside a fireplace cut in a monstrous marble mantelplece and shaped like an inverted U. A patent rocker upholstered in carpet and a hassock, relics of Mr. Foddle's connubial eras sat by, and a folding bed, already swung to concealment behind red rep curtains. A lambrequin, with ball fringe, hung from the mantelplece. Before this mantel, its pier mirror of better days tilted to reflect the room. Mr. Foddle paused for view of Annie Kineady there beside the crib. "The that kid of mine gets any fonder of you, Miss Annie, his pa'll get jealous."

"He's the sweetest little thing, and so smart for only three."

"Thage of his pa."

"He's the sweetest little thing, and so smart for only three."

"There you go again, running me down."

"There you go again, running me down."

across the thinning spot, raised again in a smile, revealing a flash of teeth and celluloid-looking gums. "So do I," he said.

"Like it." stood open.

"None of that," she said.
"Why not,"
"You know why not."
"You great big beauty, you, what's that got to do with it?"

your man."
"I know what I'm doing. What you don't know about my business would fill a book."

"You! Ugh, whatta I care what you'd call it?"
"Go on, tell me, Spitfire."
"Nothing, I tell you. Nothing I want you to know. Honest, for a man whose —whose mustache ought to be gray. you—you're the freshest." She bent down again into the crib. the color mounting up behind her ears and into the roots of her hair.
"I know a name for you," said Mr. Foddie, leaning in his patent rocker toward her. "Want to hear it?"

alrighty, but what does it mean, Miss ing him through a blur of scorn.

Annie, when his little body is hot all "Ugh!"

Annie, when his little body is hot all over, not real feverish, but just hot?

Dry-like."

"Touchy," he said, but desisting.

"You bet your life I'm touchy!" And with her face still awry with distaste, she slid past him, around an archipalago of furniture, and out, slamming the door. ming the door.

A^T 11 o'clock foggy quiet had set-tled over Lucy Beasley's furnished rooms-light housekeeping. In the

to cough like that with the lamp burning. Did you fix the tent arrangement to confine the fumes?"

"Come in, Miss Annie. For God's sake, do something. I never seen the poor little fellow so hard up for breath." He dragged the door wide, his face standing out whitely.

She was in and past him, and to the small crib, an open umbrella hung fantastically above it and a sheet depending, tent-fashion. Beside it a dull lamp burned into the gloom, it's hot antiseptic fumes rising.

burned into the gloom, it's hot antisep-tic fumes rising.

"The lamp, Mr. Foddie! It can be held inside for a while."

And grasping it like a torch, she parted the tent curtains and plunged

in to her waist.

Outside in the gloom of one twitch ing gas-jet Mr. Foddie paced a shor stretch of floor, hands behind him an fist beating into palm.

"Miss Annie, if you think it's a doc "Miss Annie, if you think it's a doc tor he needs, the poor little—" "Hand me a spoon there."

He inserted it, trembling.
"Is he—"
"Hand me another blanket."

BRUNT

In Spartan, which lies like a pictorn fields and the smutty coalise off, Annie. Two glasses make this silly where another can carry six, and you know it. Steve never got sectors, of nights filled with the commotion of wind and leaves floped welly against windowpanes like benevately against windowpanes and rising filling against natures and rising filling against natures and rising filling against natures and rising filling against against natures and rising filling against natures against against natures and rising filling ilies low when autumn threatens, and you know it. Steve never got roaking of wet days and chest protectors, of nights filled with the commotion of wind and leaves flopped wetly against windowpanes like boneless hands tapping.

"I'd rather he came home beating wetly against windowpanes like boneless hands tapping.

Then, and oh, so surely, come the melancholy days themselves, and everybody's picket-fenced-in garden turns to mu with a pull to it, suching rough would! You remember that night he took all that cider over, a few roads and roads a

HE FLUNG OUT HIS LEGS, SLIPPING DOWN INTO THE CHAIR. CHIN IN NECKTIE.

"He had enough respect for his job all these years never to show up there tipsy; he had enough respect for his baby never to let him smell the vileness on his father's breath. He—he's got enough respect for his sister never to want her to be here at the house when he—he comes home silly, but—but what's he got for me? His wife! For me! What, Liddy, what? What?" And she fell forward in her own arms, drenched in a bath of tears.

"He flung out his heavy legs, slipping down in his chair, chin in necktie. "Ah-h-h!" The smile grew on his face as the indoor warmth and dryness crept on his face, and he closed his eyes and lay back. "Supper, girl," he said, finally. She leaned to him her ear tuned to his breathing, a second of doubt flashing over her as he lay quiescent. "Steve—Stevey, are—are you tired?

tears.

I always said. and it's hard to live to see the day how right I was."

"There—there just never was a father and baby like them together. Jiddy. You know for yourself there just—never—was!"

"Now, now, dearie!"

"Now, now, dearie!"

"And how he used to crawl on his ill fours till his big bones ached. Liddy, acting hows, err the boy to ride him. For hours, Liddy, till I used to get scared the baby wouldn't sleep from excitement, and grab him up and in the burn of it on his bones, I tell you the taste of it on his tongue and the burn of it on his insides again after these three years. He says him—after the proportion and the burn of it on his insides again the proportion to the lashing, and I took the him, Liddy. I tell you he so the can be twith him, Liddy. I take the time to with him, Liddy. I then, Liddy. I warming and thickening the range to the ceiling and down again, warming and thickening the range to the ceiling and down again, warming and thickening the range to the ceiling and down again, warming and thickening the range to the ceiling a his gate; came his footsteps around to the side entrance, placed at uneven intervals, and the sound of mud sucking as the shoes withdrew.

Within her chair and in a silence that any start of the shoes with the shoes

don't believe me, look at my packed telescope there in the corner and my veil on my hat and—"

"Annie!"

"He had enough respect for his job all these years never to show up there tipsy; he had enough respect for his "Ah-h-h-h"." He flung out his heavy the flung out his heavy in his chair, chin is she recoiled, with her great bronze factory. And, finally, like ghouls to

"Steve-Stevey, are-are you tired Is that all's the-the matter?"

germ, that's what meningitis is, a foreign germ that got him."
"But, Steve—"
"That night in Liddy's bed the little fellow, so used to his own little bed.

she recoiled, with her great bronze head flung back from him and quiv-ering with outrage, as if the very warm waters.
"Steven!" she cried, reaching out.
"Get my boy; you get him."

pressing back with tight lips the sobs against them.

"Steve—Stevey—"

He was constantly with the back of his hand daubing his lips and the corners of his eyes.

"Steve—Steve, don't you know baby can—can smell it on your breath now the same as he could if he was alive—Steve!"

"Who's doin' this, you or me?"

"Steve, ain't I your wife? Don't I count for nothing? Is all the man in you layin' out there in—in the little grave? Ain't you got nothing for me that's left? Ain't we got each other, Steve; ain't—"

"It's a germ, the doctor said, a germ, that's what meningitis is, a think the station. She found a seat in the gar of the station. She found a seat in the germ, that's what meningitis is, a think and gaseous, and when the train the station are station. The air in there hung thick and gaseous, and when the train

the station. She found a seat in the day coach. The air in there hung thick and gaseous, and when the train jerked out almost immediately, celling lamps, with their sick yellow wicks of light, began to sway. She sat on the red plush seat, telescope across her knees and eyes squeezed

she recoiled, with her great bronze head flung back from him and quivering with cutrage, as if the very withes of her were unwrung in spite of her, she yearned toward him, her compassion flowing over her like warm waters. er days.
At 2595 Washington avenue, sinis-

"Get my boy; you get him."

"Steven, you're crazy with——"

"Steven, you're crazy with——"

"Shut up!, he shouted, raising his head from his arms and regarding her through inflamed eyes. "Shut up or get out! Shut up! My boy! Get my boy, d'ye hear?" He rose and cans of the add-hot-water-and-serve foods of the lodger on the window sills, Mrs. Lucy Beaston the window sills with the window sil ter looking with its front door sag-ging in like a toothless mouth, its

William and the first work in the first work of the first work of

"Sh-h-h-h!" She raised her face to him with her finger laid across

"The he just don't look one bit like you. Mr. Foddie."

"There you go again, running me down."

"Why, he—he's just the sweetest little thing, Mr. Foddie. Yesterday, with you layin' down and needing quiet, Beasiley let me take him down to the store with me in the afternoon. Wasn't just crasy about him; even old Einstein went out and bought him a sack of candy."

"Same way when I take him down to the store. Girls from one end of the floor to the other just honey the little geezer so."

She withdrew her hand softly from the heart of the crib, but a little wail rose with it.

"See, he likes my hand," and she replaced it with a tremolo of great pride in her voice; "he likes it."

** * * *

M. Foddie seated himself in the carpet rocker and fitted the ten tips of his fingers together. His mustache, so suspiciously lighter than the hair, brushed so painstakingly across the thinning spot, raised again.

She with the conditions of an object or croup.

Then the drag of soft shoes across carpet and indications of an object or two placed down. Finally quiet so lasting that after a time she crept down to her pillow once more, but not relaxed to it, and her eyes open to the dark.

Lying there taut for sound, when it did come, and in spite of herself, she sprang trembling to her feet, dragging a swirl of sheet with her; and when an abysmal gasp seemed to have no end, thrust her feet into knitted slippers and, wrapped in a kimono of large-figured cotton crepe, sloughed, shivering, through the staccatos at the door adjoining, her whisper breaking out into voice.

"Mr. Foddie—open—please—Mr. Foddie."

The door swung back to reveal him in the fiannel dressing gown, peering and quavering, and the hot medicinal sand quavering. Did you fix the tent ar-

"What?" Her glance flashed to the door.

"Nothing to you and lots to me."
"You've left him!" "Have not!"
"Whatta you call living away from him like this six months and trimmin' hats for a livin', I'd like to know, if it ain't that? New way of living with

"Why, Mr. Foddle, you yourself home sick from the store yesterday and little Robbie—"

He struck himself resoundingly upon the chest and smoothed his hair, so smoothly pomaded across a thinning spot and three shades darker than the too brown mustache.

"Never felt better in my life."
"Beasley says that's what you always eay after one of your heart spells, and then right away start to spells, and then right away start to the components of the side of the chest of the chest and smoothed his hair, so smoothly pomaded across a thinning spot and three shades darker than the too brown mustache.

"Never felt better in my life."

"Beasley says that's what you always eay after one of your heart spells, and then right away start to the chest time she sprung the pony-skin on."

"Same. She was a great one for that line of talk from you as I'm going that line of talk from you as I'm goi

"And what about me? What about me? Do I need a drop to warm me for gitting here day in and day out, my baby gone? Do I?"
"It was always a sin before the Lord I need to say a man shall."

iken this way proves it. It was a liken this way proves it. It was a line before the Lord how he banked in before the Lord how he banked nobody here but me waiting. The way not he strong foods that wage-earn of the strong